DISCOURSE ON THE IMPACT OF INDUSTRIALIZATION IN THE SELECT NOVELS OF ELIZABETH GASKELL, CHARLES DICKENS, AND CHARLOTTE BRONTE : A CRITICAL STUDY

A Research Proposal

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Introduction

Down the ages, literature has been an influential tool to teach and enlighten the society through many different ways. It tries to depict the realistic picture of the society. Literature explores the fundamental aspects of society such as social justice, human nature, social values, morality, etc. Therefore, Literature is considered to be the universal phenomenon.

Literature is defined in many different ways; the most appropriate definition of literature that corresponds the present research is " Literature reflects the society. " As has been mentioned in the definition, literature indeed reflects the contemporary society. It explores both sides of the society good and evil. Literature depicts the vices in the society to make the society realize what is going wrong and how to correct it. In the present research work we are going to do the same. We will try to examine the selected texts and will discuss in detail the issues like social injustice, degradation of human values, poverty, exploitation of working class, etc. during industrialization.

Industrial Revolution has its roots in France but the actual process of industrialization began in Britain in the 18th century and flourished to the other parts of the world. The term ' Industrial Revolution ' was firstly popularized by the English economic historian Arnold Toynbee to describe Britain's economic development. In features of industrial revolution involved technological, social, cultural, economic, and political.

Any kind of transformation or development comes with its merits and demerits and Industrial Revolution was not exception to this. During Victorian period Industrial Revolution was on its peak, it has terrible effects on the society. English towns were turning into slums. People were living in abject poverty and overcrowded dwellings.

Working class was facing the issues like poverty, child labor, sexual harassment, lack of education, etc. It is said that Industrial Revolution turned the merry England into smoky and dusty state. This massive social upheaval has not been overlooked by the scholars, philosophers, and writers. Instead, they have depicted contemporary social condition and the situation of working class

through their writings. The major authors who have raised these issues in their works are: Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, Charlotte Bronte, etc. During the time of Industrial Revolution, there was a substantial growth in literary publications. The social unrest, poor working conditions in factories and mills created a need of " industrial novel ".

Many authors have decided to give voice to the poor working class and they wrote novels around the working class families and portrayed their struggle to sustain. The Industrial Novels have two core objectives; to raise the issue of poor working class and the exploitation and suffering they have faced while working in the factories and mills.

Elizabeth Gaskell, who was from the industrial town Manchester, tried to illustrate the plight of the working class during industrialization through her novels. Specifically, *Mary Barton* and *North and South.*

Charles Dickens was extremely successful in depicting the suffering of the working class due to his honesty, integrity, and commitment to industrial novel. Dickens also tried to portray the realistic picture of the working class and hardships faced by them during the Industrial Revolution through his novels such as *Oliver Twist, David Copperfield, Hard Times*, etc. Charlotte Bronte's *Shirley* was an exception to her writing style. She used to write the romantic and light-hearted tales of love and adventure but Shirley is totally different in style, structure, and tone. *Shirley* is set against the plight of mill workers and put forth the issues like morality and social justice.

Industrial novel perhaps sparked the ideas of social, cultural, economic, and political change in the contemporary British society. The proposed research will explore in detail the Impact of Industrialization on all the aspects of society in the light of selected texts.

Significance of the Study

The present study will help to understand the social, cultural, economic, and political situation of the contemporary society during Industrial Revolution. It will bring out the specific reasons behind the degradation of society and it’s values during the rapid growth of industrialization in Britain. It will investigate

the status of rich and poor during Industrial Revolution and that will help us to understand true reasons behind the sufferings and exploitation of working class.

The proposed research is formulated to highlight the neglected aspects and perspectives of Industrial Revolution which have been discussed by the selected authors in their respective texts. Also, it will study the class structure of society during Industrial Revolution so that we can find how class structure caused the tension between the social strata.

The present research has obvious relevance with contemporary social order where industrial area is growing rapidly; specifically, the developing countries like India, China, Brazil. The present study can be considered as a critical analysis of social, cultural, economic, and political impact of Industrialization on the contemporary British society as has been discussed in selected novels.

Aims and objectives of the study

In order to do the comprehensive study of the selected topic the researcher shall attempt:

1) To make critical and detailed analysis of the select novels with respect to the theme of the impact of industrialization.

2) To highlight the suffering and the exploitation of the poor due to industrialization.

3) To investigate the relationships between the different classes of the society as has been discussed by the authors in the texts.

4) To expose the degradation of the human values due to industrialization.

5) To discuss the social, cultural, economic, and political situation in the society due to the growing industrialization.

6) To critically examine the plot of the selected novels in order to understand the context.

7) To highlight the expectations of the society from the industrialization and what they have achieved instead.

8) To critically study the discourse from selected novels and to present merits and demerits of industrialization.

9) To identify how the authors have depicted the contemporary British society during industrialization.

Hypothesis

The present research will explore the social, cultural, economic, and political implications of industrialization on the contemporary British society of that time through the selected novels. It will enhance the understanding of the class structure and how it affected the society. It has been observed that Elizabeth Gaskell, Charles Dickens, and Charlotte Bronte were deeply concerned about the social upheaval due to rapid growth of industrialization and they have textualised their observations in the selected novels.

It is also assumed that unless we study the impact of industrialization, on the society, in detail; it is difficult to understand what were the reasons behind the suffering, exploitation, and hardships faced by the poor due to industrialization. And, the present research work will explore these aspects categorically in the light of selected texts.

The proposed research work will try to create an awareness in this contemporary society by pointing out towards the core reasons due to which there was social upheaval and degradation of the fundamental living standards of the working class in the British society during industrialization.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

Industrialization and its impact on the society is really a broad area of study. However, Elizabeth Gaskell, Charles Dickens, Charlotte Bronte have raised this issue predominantly in their selected novels. These authors and their respective texts have discussed in detail the impact on industrialization on the contemporary British society of that time. They have managed to create a significant discourse about the suffering, exploitation and hardship faced by the poor and working class due to industrialization.

However, the present research has some limitations too. It is confined to study the selected works of Elizabeth Gaskell, Charles Dickens, and Charlotte Bronte. The present research is mainly depends upon the availability of the study material available in the library and on the web and therefore it relies on the discourse which has been presented by the authors in their respective works.

Review of Literature

The Industrial Revolution has a huge impact on British society. It has touched every aspect of the society such as social, cultural, economic, and political. The rapid growth in industrialization brought the distinct shift in social order. The British society of that time has witnessed a massive transformation in class structure too. The gap between the poor and rich was increasing substantially. This period of social unrest influenced the field of literature too.

The literary scholars and writers of that time have generated thousands of essays, novels, plays, poems, etc. against the backdrop of Industrial Revolution. Many of them have depicted realistic picture of the society in their works. During the time of realistic fiction and social criticism of 1850s, the industrialization became the prominent theme amongst writers.

Many renowned authors like Thomas Hardy, Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, have reflected extensively on industrialization and its impact on society. Charles Dickens was considered as the first author who has depicted the issue of child labor in his novels for example, *David Copperfield, Oliver Twist*

and The Great Expectations. They have also put forward the issues like increase in poverty, exploitation of working class, degradation of human values and morality of people due to industrialization. These prominent authors have tired to become mouthpiece of the working class and also tried to give voice to the voiceless.

These authors, through their writings, have warned society about the major consequences of abandoning human values, giving more importance to money than morals, and adapting the way of Machine. Elizabeth Gaskell in her novel *North and South*, Charles Dickens in his *Hard Times* and Charlotte Bronte in her novel *Shirley* depicted the realistic portrayal of industrial towns that appeared as 'wastelands' inhabited by the working class.

Research methodology

The methodology which has to be used for the present research work will be descriptive, interpretive, and analytical. The data collected through primary and secondary sources will critically be analyzed and will present the impact of industrialization in the light of selected texts.

The present research work does not call for any field work and hence MLA method of research will be followed. The present research would fundamentally be based on the critical analysis of the selected novels against the backdrop of industrialization and its impact on the society. As has been mentioned above the proposed research work does not need any kind of field work and therefore original texts of the authors and secondary sources such as critical books, magazines, journals, articles, web materials, etc. will be referred for the same.

Data Collection

The data required for the present research work will be collected from both primary and secondary sources:

1) **Primary Data Collection**

The primary data for the present research work will be collected from the original works of Elizabeth Gaskell, Charles Dickens, Charlotte Bronte. They are as follows:

i) ***North and South*** by Elizabeth Gaskell

ii) ***Hard Times*** by Charles Dickens

iii) ***Shirley*** by Charlotte Bronte

2) **Secondary Data Collection**

The secondary sources that will be referred for the present research work will be critical books, reference books, magazines, journals, news articles, web materials, etc.

Methods and Techniques of Data Collection

The present research will systematically carry out a critical study of the selected works by using Library Research Method. The researcher will visit

different libraries and consult for the collecting data of the relevant texts and writers. The present research does not have any involvement of field work.

Methods and Techniques of Data Analysis

The proper analysis of the collected data is crucial in the process of research. Analyzing data is a process to find and systematically arrange the collected data in a proper sequence by organizing the data into different categories. Qualitative Method of data analysis will be used for the present research work.

Tentative Chapter Scheme

The present research tentatively proposes the following chapter scheme:

Chapter I : Introduction

Chapter II : Impact of Industrialization in Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*

Chapter III : Impact of Industrialization in Charles Dickens *Hard Times*

Chapter IV : Impact of Industrialization in Charlotte Bronte's *Shirley*

Chapter V : Conclusion

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